

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRL #0088/01 0231738
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 231738Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3103
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0221
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0155
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0205
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0496
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0119
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9516
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0664
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0420
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0077
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 0487
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0250
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 1652
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0578
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 1178
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0144
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0638
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0673

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 000088

SIPDIS
STATE FOR P SPECIAL ASSISTANT CONSTANTINOS NICOLAIDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [KPAL](#) [XG](#) [EG](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: GERMANY: FOCUSED ON ASSISTING EGYPT WITH POLICING
ITS LAND BORDER WITH GAZA

REF: A. STATE 4900
[1](#)B. BERLIN 0074
[1](#)C. BERLIN 0066

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFF RATHKE. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Germany's internal deliberations continue on the extent of its possible participation in the U.S.-proposed Gaza arms interdiction effort, but it seems unlikely that the Germans will participate in any maritime operations. The Germans are currently focused on offering Egypt technical support on border policing, and still have a group of experts standing by to go to Egypt as soon as Cairo gives the green light. Israel has not yet approached Germany to request an anti-smuggling MOU, but an Israeli delegation has requested to visit Berlin next week. Looking ahead, Germany believes the border to Gaza must be opened to more than just humanitarian aid in order to bring the border with Egypt under control. Germany also emphasizes the need to "strengthen" the Egyptian government to encourage its continued positive engagement, and to that end, continues to support holding a possible Gaza reconstruction conference in Cairo. END SUMMARY.

STILL DELIBERATING

[1](#)2. (C) Post followed up with MFA Deputy Near East Office Director Robert Doelger January 23 to find out if Germany had reached any conclusions about the extent of its involvement in the U.S.-proposed Gaza arms interdiction effort (refs A and B). Doelger indicated that Germany's internal deliberations were continuing. Because the international community still did not have a clear picture of what kind of support Egypt and Israel wanted, it was difficult to reach any firm conclusions. In that regard, Doelger was curious about what had come out of a meeting of senior Egyptian and Israeli national security officials yesterday (January 22). Doelger also confirmed that Germany was looking forward to participating the forthcoming workshop, which he understood was tentatively scheduled to be hosted by Denmark sometime in

February. He thought that would offer a good opportunity to firm up some of the ideas discussed at the January 15 meeting in Washington.

FOCUS ON SUPPORT FOR EGYPT IN CONTROLLING THE LAND BORDER

13. (C) In the meantime, Doelger said that Germany remained focused on offering Egypt technical support on border policing to address the problem of weapons smuggling. He noted that Germany still had a group of experts, consisting of a diplomat and a handful of police officers from the Ministry of Interior, standing by to go to Egypt as soon as Cairo indicated that it was ready to receive them. He confirmed press reporting, however, that Egypt was proving reluctant about accepting any outside help, claiming that most of the weapons smuggling into Gaza was by sea and not via the land border with Egypt. Doelger also thought the Egyptians were holding off on accepting offers of help on border control until it saw what Israel would do and how the political situation developed in the wake of the cease-fires.

PARTICIPATION IN MARITIME OPERATIONS UNLIKELY

14. (C) While remaining open to how it might contribute to the Gaza arms interdiction effort, Doelger said he thought it unlikely that Germany would participate in any maritime operations. He noted that there had been proposals to "double hat" some existing naval operations and task forces in the Mediterranean (like Operation Active Endeavor) to give them the additional responsibility of interdicting arms

destined for Gaza. He indicated that in order for the German navy to participate in such operations, the government would have to go to the Bundestag for a parliamentary mandate, which he inferred it would be reluctant to do with national elections coming up in September.

ISRAEL DELEGATION COMING TO BERLIN

15. (C) Doelger confirmed that Israel had not yet approached Germany to request an anti-smuggling MOU like it has with the U.S. However, he did report that the Israelis, at their own initiative, were sending a delegation to Berlin next week. It was not yet clear what was on their agenda.

KEY POINTS: OPENING THE BORDER, STRENGTHENING EGYPT

16. (C) Doelger argued for the creation of a mechanism for the provision of humanitarian assistance, but added that Israel had been prevailed upon to open the border to more than just that. In the wake of the widespread destruction in Gaza, it was important that the inhabitants be allowed to bring in basic household items as well, like mattresses, furniture, etc. He thought that as long as the Rafah crossing remained closed to regular commercial traffic, it would be difficult to bring the border with Egypt under control. Doelger also thought it was important to support and "strengthen" the Egyptian government so it could continue to "take risks" in advancement of the peace process. To that end, he reiterated Germany's suggestion that a possible Gaza reconstruction conference be held in Cairo (ref C).

Koenig